Efficiency of Steel Companies

2640. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state the details of steps taken or proposed to be taken for improving efficiency and to enhance productivity, to make the Indian steel cost- competitive in international market?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OFTHE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORE TRIPATHY): Government have taken several steps to improve efficiency and to enhance productivity so as to make Indian steel cost- competitive in international market. These include:

(i) Providing financial support to R&D ventures in Iron and Steel sector.

(ii) Upgradation/modernisation of public sector steel plants.

(iii) Encouraging research and development activities with financial assistance from Steel Development fund (SDF)

(iv) Encouragement to reduction in energy consumption.

(v) Promotion of new products and new technologies.

(vi) Stress on value added products.

(vii) Increasing use of the evolving software technology.

(viii) Improvement of the supply management chain and logistics networks.

(ix) Setting up of different institutes/organisations for development of skilled manpower to help the industry.

Steel Companies Request for Review of Interest Rate

2641. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item captioned "Prices Boomerang on steel companies" published in the Business Standard dated the 3rd July, 2002;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) whether it is a fact that some of the steel companies have